

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

House Bill 341 (Howard County Delegation)

Economic Matters

Howard County - Alcoholic Beverage Act of 1998

This bill establishes an appointed five-member Board of License Commissioners in Howard County to issue licenses, monitor alcoholic beverage licensees, hold hearings, and propose decisions related to alcoholic beverage licenses in the county. The bill also provides for the membership, powers, duties, and compensation of board members. Under current law, members of the county council serve as members of the Board of License Commissioners.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: Potential minimal increase in Howard County expenditures. No effect on revenues.

Small Business Effect: None.

Fiscal Analysis

Bill Summary: The bill requires the county executive to appoint five members to the board from a list of nominees provided by each member of the county council. Members and employees of the board are subject to the ethics laws of Howard County. The bill also provides qualifications for members and terms for the removal of members by the county council. The board is required to meet at least once a month. The compensation for members for each meeting is \$55 for the chairperson not to exceed a total of \$1,300 in a fiscal year, and \$50 for the other members not to exceed a total of \$1,200 per member in a fiscal year. The board is responsible for proposing regulations to the county council regarding alcoholic beverages and submitting an annual budget no later than January 15 of each year. The board is required to hear cases and propose decisions relating to violations of

alcoholic beverages law. However, an aggrieved person of a proposed decision by the board may appeal to the county council for a final decision. If an appeal is not made to the county council within 30 days of the proposed decision, the board's decision is final. Aggrieved persons may appeal any decision of the county council to circuit court.

Local Effect: Under current law, members of the county council are compensated for their duties as members of the Board of License Commissioners. The chairman is paid \$55 per meeting and other members are paid \$50 per meeting. This bill would provide the same compensation for appointed members of the board, but would cap total compensation in any fiscal year. Other personnel of the board of license commissioners would not be affected by the change in board members. The bill provides for an appeals process which would require the county council to hold a hearing on an appeal. Members of the county council would be compensated at the same rate as the Board of License Commissioners for these hearings. Although the number of appeals which may be heard by the county council is not known, it is assumed to be minimal. For illustrative purposes, the Howard County Board of License Commissioners held 16 hearings in 1997, at a total cost of \$4,080 for member compensation.

Information Source(s): Howard County, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - March 5, 1998
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